THE W.C. FIELDS BOOK

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THE W. C. FIELDS BOOK/WITZEND 9 © 1973, Wonderful Publishing Company, Box 177, Coney Island Station, Brooklyn, New York, 11224. $5.00 per copy. Bill Pearson, Editor. Phil Seuling, Publisher. Cover painting by Jeff Jones. This special issue of WITZEND (No.9) would not have been possible without the generous cooperation of Mr. Shelby Kirch, whose rare collection of stills, reference material, and memorabilia is in evidence on almost every page. The next issue of WITZEND will look more like the earlier comix issues, numbers 7 and 8 of which are still available from the above address at $1.50 per copy. Issue No. 10 may be ordered in advance at $1.50 per copy, but we're keeping its publication date a secret. If you're over 90, don't take a chance. Please direct editorial correspondence only to Bill Pearson, Box 15755, Arcadia Station, Phoenix, Arizona, 85060. We're sorry about the delay. Things happened . . .

THE FILMS OF CHARLES BOGLE

The screenplays for the majority of W.C. Fields starring films were conceived by Charles Bogle, and he was one of the few authors the wily old actor respected. Alert to his client's stubborn disdain for anyone hired to put words in his mouth, Bogle put down on paper a minimum of dialogue or description. He did almost nothing, actually, in the line of screenwriting. Rather, he supplied his characters with the conglomerated impressions of a curious mind, and blocked out the scenes in a straightforward fashion too real to be true.

The critics of the day who insisted the plots were inferior to the talents of the star were wrong, as critics often are, either out of snobbery or ignorance. The films were the way they were on purpose, and in spite of efforts to make them otherwise.

The Old-Fashioned Way

"THE OLD–FASHIONED WAY" is a tour-de-force for Fields the Flamboyant, his best characterization. Petty, self-centered and imperious, 'McGonigle the Great' is Fields' most sincere portrayal.

McGonigle not only assumed his own vainglorious title, he is so self-possessed that he ignores the most obvious signs of the world's rebuffs. From his first entrance, late for the train, and one step ahead of the law, the pompous impresario is shown to be a scoundrel and a fraud.

It's period picture, pre-dating by about 35 years it's date of release in 1934. That makes it a remarkably distant period from today, and viewing it from our perspective is a fascinating journey into a corporate subconscious.

There really *was* a turn-of-the-century America in which Ladies and Gentlemen spent the better part of their lives living up to those definitions, and went about their various occupations within a clearly defined structure. It was an era in which knowledge and sophistication had not yet been abridged, homogenized, and force-fed to the hinterlands of the nation through the TV tube.

McGonigle really lived. What other kind of man but a blustering rascal could have held together a troupe of vagrant actors during such a time? Citizens were considerably more sober in manner then, at least in rural communities, and indifferent to the grand aspirations of a winged soul like McGonigle.

Fields knew the time and he knew the characters. They came out of his impressionable years as a struggling child performer, when the prospects of regular meals were rare. He observed the barroom diplomats and brawlers, the weasels and rabbits who would cringe at the first hint of an argument . . . how people of all stations made introductions and farewells. In particular, he learned how a winner carried himself; the man who stands above the crowd not in height but in kingly demeanor.

As in most of his films, the memorable parts are not the often misquoted dialogue from the script. How could anyone describe the look he gives Cleopatra Pepperday when she begins to sing? Or the oafish manner he employs to wade through the pernicious creditors who dog his trail into the most private corners of his life?

McGonigle has just about drawn his last card, and it's not an ace. The chips are down, and his future rides on a bluff. To keep what remains of his company together, he's reduced to romancing the most notorious character in Bellefontaine . . . a wealthy but warped dowager who lives in a giddy Victorian fantasy of her own imagination. Cleopatra Pepperday dreams of a career on the stage, and agrees to finance the production in which she'll make her debut.

Comes the night of the big show. The town turns out en masse to see the ridiculous old dame make a fool of herself in public. But McGonigle has no intention of allowing this travestry to occur, whatever the consequences. The feature of the evening is the DRUNKARD, a primitive morality play from the history books, and nothing, not even the law, can stop the show once the curtain is raised. Every manner of reaction is shown among the crowd, from boredom to entrancement, but one thing is certain: the performance is a real one, a professional production despite all obstacles, due to nothing but the integrity of the stubborn McGonigle.

The play ends, but who is this lonely figure in rumpled undershirt who bounds on the stage, starkly lit by a powerful spotlight? Is it McGonigle or Fields who suddenly appears for an encore? No matter, it's the last performance of the juggling clown, and his act is a total delight. This misshapen, half-sotted old relic can still transfix an audience with his skill and grace.

The finish is a classic of unselfconscious candor. Stopped cold by a juicy tomatoe in the face, he barks "DRAT" as the burlap curtain slams to the floor.

Backstage, McGonigle is met by his stooge with a telegram. He blusters away the real message which has officially (as the tomatoe had hinted) ended his career.

But he has yet to receive the third and fatal blow of the night. Through the thin partition backstage, he overhears the insensitive businessman father tell his stagestruck son that McGonigle is "a disgrace to his profession".

"Rather a blunt fellow there", mutters the old trouper, even alone maintaining face. But the weight of his misfortunes has finally brought even the Great McGonigle to his knees. He hastens to play out a brusque farewell scene with his daughter and her ardent beau, but she isn't fooled. "That's funny," she muses at his departure, "'He never acted like *that* before."

After a brief shot on the train, where it's established that the boy and girl will live happily ever after, we see McGonigle and his loyal 'second man' selling a surefire cure-all tonic from the back of a rickity wagon somewhere in the boondocks.

"It will cure hoarseness," he croaks in a froggy whisper at the end of his supercon sales pitch, and takes a big swallow. "It will cure hoarseness," he bellows, the ultimate symbol of authority, as the camera moves back to observe the effectiveness on the crowd.

It's A Gift

If any of Fields' films deserve to be remembered for a century, a good case could be made for this one. The star carries off an inspired performance with bizarre but totally believable extremes in characterization. The supporting players are all excellent, and the settings and mood are uncanny. Made in 1933 in a modest, unpretentious style that holds up well in comparison to some of the big budget stylized epics of the day, what once might have appeared to be no more than a simply plotted framework for a clever vaudevillian, "IT'S A GIFT" turns out to be a fascinating social history as well. But don't let such serious judgements turn you off, because the greatest charm of the film continues to be the fact that it's funny.

This is one of those stories that sort of grew. Broadened from a long sketch of a man trying to get some sleep on a warm summer evening, (the working title of the film was "BACK PORCH") it fills out into the history of a small-town family during the great depression who (thanks to a modest inheritance) set out on the last leg of the Conquest of the West. Rather than center the plot around the robust young buck with a thirst for adventure, (who will follow his sweetheart across the plains 'just as soon as he's got busfare') or the heroine, who's embarking on a journey to unknown territory on the other side of the continent, the author centers his attentions on the fading patriarch; a middle-aged, battle-scarred, meek, vain, selfish, petty, extravagent, boring, nasty, clumsy, boorish, cowardly, mean and kindly wretch who has somehow come to grips with himself.

Fields knew us as we know ourselves in the morning, taking a shave. Before we put on the hats we assume to contend with our demanding neighbors. Whether top hat, or helmet, or wig . . . Bisonette knows himself too, but like most of us he ends up depending a great deal on 'fate'.

All caution to the wind, he buys a California orange grove . . . by mail. Clearly, he's a man with a dream.

Although the sly showman often ruthlessly pads and trims the storyline to accomodate his own outrageous indulgences, it holds together beautifully. There have been many fine actors, but few versatile enough to offer more than vignettes of life or at best finely etched portraits of a one-dimentional character. Somehow, Bisonette reacts to every assault with a fresh perspective. He's a bully to his spoiled son, a compassionate father to his daughter, a cringing dog beneath the sharp tongue and heel of his wife, and every sort of fellow to the people he deals with. To the boys singing around a campfire along the highway he's a wistful troubadour, recalling the romantic lyrics of a song from his long ago courting days . . .

The park scene is a ballet of destruction, predating the black comedy of later comedians in a broad burlesque of a boorish family on a picnic. The lines are all delivered well, and complimentary to the scene, but they're merely refinement to the magic generated by Fields. Every move is an oafish posture more absurd than the last. Every stumble and lurch as he chomps through a heavy lunch, as he tugs with the dog for a pillow, sending cascades of feathers to the four winds. His wife berates him disdainfully with "Those were my *mother's* feathers" and he responds absentmindedly "I didn't know your mother *had* feathers."

At the end of their journey, he's exposed as a failure and a fool. Sad, but not desolate at the ultimate calamity of a calamitous career, he hears the lonesome echo of a train whistle off in the distance, and accepts it as an omen of what he knows will be an igominious return to the east.

But in an absurd twist of fate, a rotund farmer appears from out of nowhere to deliver a wild account of a racetrack that must have this tiny parcel of land for a grandstand — that they'll pay any price for it.

Bisonette sneaks a quick slug from his hip flask and is immediately infused with renewed confidence.

In the next moment a fleet of expensive sedans speed out of the dusty dirt road to disgorge a horde of flailing financeers. They accost the stalwart head of the family in a sinister bargaining session which terminates abruptly when Bisonette's original brochure, describing a beautiful, vast orange grove, is produced. "It's that and 40 — no, 44 thousand dollars. Mr. Jones (the fellow who brought the news) must get his percentage."

Quick fade out, then into a paradise. Mother and family are leaving for a jaunt in their limosine, as immaculate and haughty as the Queen and her court, while the old man, elegantly casual at poolside, in a garden of orange blossoms, mixes a drink and stretches out in his chair with a contented sigh.

Man On The Flying Trapeze

Effortlessly the characters of "THE MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE" come alive and assume the dimensions of past and future within minutes into the story. The roles of the major participants are predictable, even cliche, but the human condition allows limited options for action for all of us whether we like it or not. Although Fields cared not for its blessings himself, he understood the family unit precisely, realized the constant drama of conflicting personalities, and used it as the most ideally identifiable situation for a relative point of departure.

The family, after all, is the basic society of civilized man — an organization of individuals who sacrifice some measure of personal gratification for the overall long range benefit of the unit as a whole.

In Fields' films, it was Dad who gave up the most. His conflicts with the more

demanding egos surrounding him, and his own oscillating ambitions, is the burden of every man alive.

Five minutes past the credits, we're still watching Dad taking off his socks. He hasn't said ten words yet (a few 'yes, dears' intersperced between his wife's rambling and obviously nightly soliloquy) but you know by his bored and weary exercise that Ambrose Wolfinger has had a long, trying day, and that he's just about as thrilled to hit the pillow as he will be to get up for more of the same the next morning.

Even the threat of burglars in the basement offers no incentive for this timid soul to interrupt his days end reverie. Finally, however, more to escape his demanding in-laws than for any more noble reason, he descends to challenge the rogues.

These two, by this time, have not only been sidetracked in their nefarious mission by Dad's barrel of applejack, they've been pretty near calcified by it. As it turns out, they're a wistful pair in this condition, and by chance sing a boozy ballad dear to Wolfinger's romantic old heart.

Through a series of perfectly logical misfortunes, Wolfinger becomes the triple-time victim of the nights adventures, and appears for breakfast the next morning to attract additional abuse from his unsympathetic family.

No one of less subtlety could sustain our interest in this character beyond this point. Wolfinger is obviously inept, not terribly bright, altogether a cowardly man. Yet quietly, with the most reserved sarcasm, he scores just often enough to keep us alert and rooting for him.

He's the antithesis of every heroic concept, but in actual fact no less our hero than if he were swinging a broadsword on the deck of a burning pirate ship. It's the odds that place him there, and his stance in the fray. No number of adversaries can bury him, no lack of optimism can default his private dignity, no matter how foolish the fates portray him.

Ambrose Wolfinger is a wrestling enthusiast. He has acquired, at no small cost, a front row ticket to the big match between two formidable personages named Tosoff and Meshobbab, and intends to ask for his first afternoon off in twenty-five years to see it.

As of course it would be, this is the worst possible day to ask for the afternoon off. But Wolfinger has his heart set on seeing that match. His courage faltering at the moment of truth, he fabricates a modest lie, the occasion of his

mother-in-law's funeral, to get out of the office.

Every adversity possible delays him from reaching the arena on time, and his unhappy day culminates in a disastrous accident, the description of which could only be appreciated (as it subsequently is in the story) from the impassioned defense by Carlotta Monti in the role of Wolfinger's loyal secretary from the office.

Meanwhile, every possible misconsequence has conspired to bloat a foolish but innocuous fib into a town scandal of epic proportions.

After suffering every abuse known to modern man, and a few left over from the dark ages, Wolfinger arrives bruised and disheveled at his home and haven only to be accosted at the door by a houseful of outraged tormentors eager to finish him off.

But when stepson Claude includes Wolfinger's daughter in his intemperate outburst, the long-suffering wretch explodes, throwing a roundhouse blow to Claude's chin. The worm has turned, (usually accompanied by cheers in a theater audience) and life will never again be the same for any of them.

You Can't Cheat An Honest Man

"YOU CAN'T CHEAT AN HONEST MAN" gives Fields another field day playing his favorite role, the loud and vulgar con man. It's another 'combination of stars' picture, with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy sharing the spotlight. Also, Fields is saddled with another unlikely daughter. But despite these limitations, the film builds momentum in a nicely paced progression of scenes, and ends in a hilarious episode in the mansion of the most pompous socialites this side of Groucho's Margaret Dumont, during which Fields all but destroys the place with a dazzling ping pong exhibition.

The distinction of this character from all the others is that Larson E. Whipsnade is a man totally without conscience or any other redeeming qualities. It had obviously long been an ambition of Fields to portray such an unmitigated villain, realizing full well there were such grim people alive and kicking behind every other door, desk, and window. That the studio let him get away with it attests to his strength of will. It's not as often shown as some of the others, but worth catching when you can.

My Little Chickadee

A

B

C

D

A. Even in this candid shot between takes, with a demure Mae West and intent director Eddie Cline, Fields extends his pudgy pinkies in the delicate gestures that make each of his postures seem choreographed.

B. When George Sanders, filming 'The House of Seven Gables' on an adjoining set, accosts Mr. Fields off camera, a point of honor provokes this heated exchange.

C. Mae smooths back a stubborn strand of her co-star's hair between takes. Rare intimate view of Ms. West, whose publicity photos usually showed her with both hands perched defiantly on her hips.

D. With equipment like this, is it any wonder movies were a big deal back then?

"MY LITTLE CHICKADEE" is composed of many memorable parts, but it's not the classic it was promoted to be during filming, (on my list at least) and in retrospect Fields and Mae West were not the natural combination many people thought they would be. Each of them were professional enough to make the most out of the situation, and the resulting film is successful, even though a weaker entry on the Best Films list for both stars.

Mae West had always been a pretty broad parody of a vain and aggressive woman, but her offscreen personality was so close to her character (unlike Fields, she only played one character throughout her screen career) that she came across as a real person, and a truly sensual one, even in her late forties when this film was made. Since she had always been more concerned with the total script, with herself as the flame around which many moths orbited, and Fields had been more concerned with relationships between a diversity of characters, "MY LITTLE CHICKADEE" is more 'her' film that 'his', even though the finished print accords equal attention to both.

Individually they both shine, (Fields particularly in the "Last Gasp Saloon" scenes) but together their meetings are sometimes an embarrassment of perversity in which Fields comes across as a dirty old man. It's to his credit, I suppose, that he was never too proud to expose himself to any sort of ridicule in the parts he played, and offhand I can think of no other performer who would fill his mouth with a sandwich, then speak, spitting out half chewed food like a witless moron.

From the scant evidence of a few candid production shots, it appears the two stars got along during filming, but aside from their work they could have shared little in common.

Matching herself romantically with Fields marked the end of Mae West's career, (even though she tried to retain her 'serious' sex appeal by casting not one but two vigorous lovers in the story) but it was just a retrenching role for her aging costar. The "BANK DICK" appeared only a few months later.

– Bill Pearson

Mahatma Kane Jeeves, on the other hand, only wrote one film for Fields, but it turned out to be a humdinger. Equally considerate of the old trickster's distaste for excess words, Jeeves alloted such mundane tasks as writing them to other people, and spent the majority of his time (close to 62 consecutive years) prodding his star to tell the story in his own style. Although the comedian's face and body were bloated, no faults due to age or affliction were evident in the final product . . . a masterpiece of film comedy.

THE BANK DICK

his very own photo-story

Upon occasion, one Egbert Souse of Lompoc has been known to entertain his barroom cronies with exciting anecdotes about his distinguished career.

By chance a motion picture producer named Mackley Q. Greene overhears such a remarkable tale that he offers Souse a job on the spot.

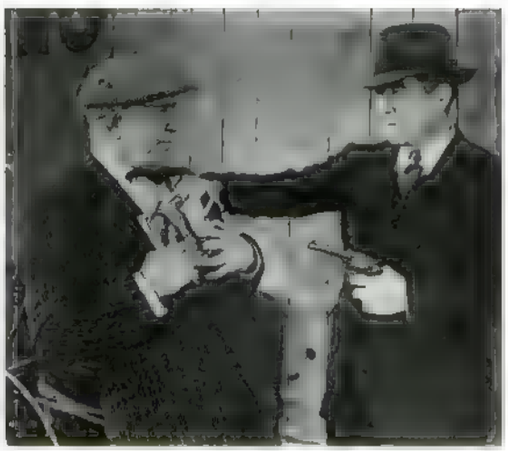
His director is drunk, so Souse immediately takes charge, issuing imperious orders to the film crew, already set up in the street outside.

So absurd are the script changes he blithly initiates that the indisposed director is hastily sobered up and returned to his post.

Souse makes his way back to the Black Pussy Cat Cafe only to discover to his chagrin that Joe the proprietor is out to breakfast.

Waiting on a nearby bench for the bar to reopen, he tries to make smalltalk with a fellow citizen. "Ever do any boondoggeling?" he inquires.

Meanwhile two bandits are robbing the bank where Souse's daughter's boyfriend Og Oggilby works as a teller.



Outside with their loot, the bandits argue, then split up to make their escape.

Filthy McNasty trips over the bench, and when the police arrive they find the bewildered Souse standing over the unconscious robber.

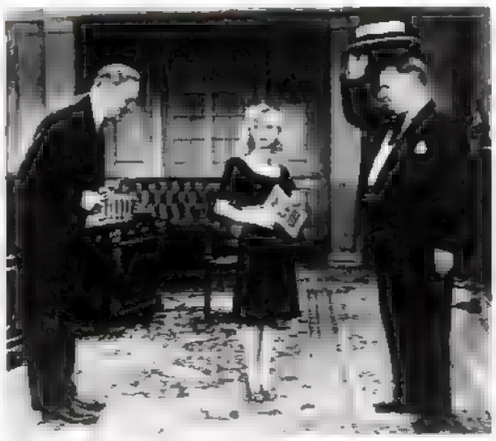
The incriminating gun still in hand, Souse is almost arrested as an accomplice in the crime, until Og Oggilby intervenes.

Quick to size up the situation, Souse not only accepts credit for the capture, but begins to elaborate the story considerably.

McNasty, conscious and belligerent, insults Souse, who has to be restrained from walloping the rascal.

THE BANK DICK...

Next morning Souse reports to the bank to receive his reward, but is delayed by several strange transactions at the teller's window.



Mr. Skinner, the bank president, and his petite secretary are equally delighted to make the acquaintance of the town hero.

Mr. Skinner offers Souse a firm handshake, a free calendar featuring "Springtime in Lompoc", and a position with the bank as 'special officer'.

So overwhelmed is Souse with this generosity that he falls off his chair and drops his change all over the floor.

On the following day he arrives bright and early in disguise, to see if anybody will recognize him.

He is very conscientious about his new job, and alert to every potential threat to the security of the bank.

An armed suspect is promptly seized, but subsequently released when overwhelming evidence of his innocence is determined.

Enjoying a quick lunch at the bar, Souse is offered valuable beefsteak mine shares for only $700, and he hurries to tell Og of this opportunity.

Og 'borrows' the money from the bank, intending to return it when his bonus comes through, but they're startled that afternoon by the untimely arrival of the bank examiner.

Souse is the model of efficiency as he makes every effort to assist J. Pinkerton Snoopington in his duties.

But the examiner has his reservations about the odd behavior of the much too helpful bank guard.

Souse has become so rattled by the desperate circumstances that he makes a spectacle of himself in front of employees and customers alike.

By nefarious means he lures Snoopington to the Black Pussy Cat Cafe, where Joe the bartender assists in slipping him a 'Michael' Finn'.

Souse returns as the bank is being robbed for the second time. While serving as a shield for the bandit, Greene appears to shake his hand.

Keeping the bank covered, the bandit forces his hostage to drive the getaway car. This proves to be a mistake.

After a wild ride during which the car and half the countryside is demolished, the bandit faints and is easily captured.

Souse receives a $5000 reward for subduing the scoundrel, returns the missing $700, and pats Mr. Skinner's secretary on the head.

With the $10,000 he gets for the wild screenplay he sells to the motion picture studio, Souse buys a mansion and lives happily ever after.

THE FILMS OF OTIS CRIBLECOBLIS

Criblecoblis was a strange bird. He lived on the island of Whey in the Afghan Ocean, and multiplied by millions until the island sank in 1647.

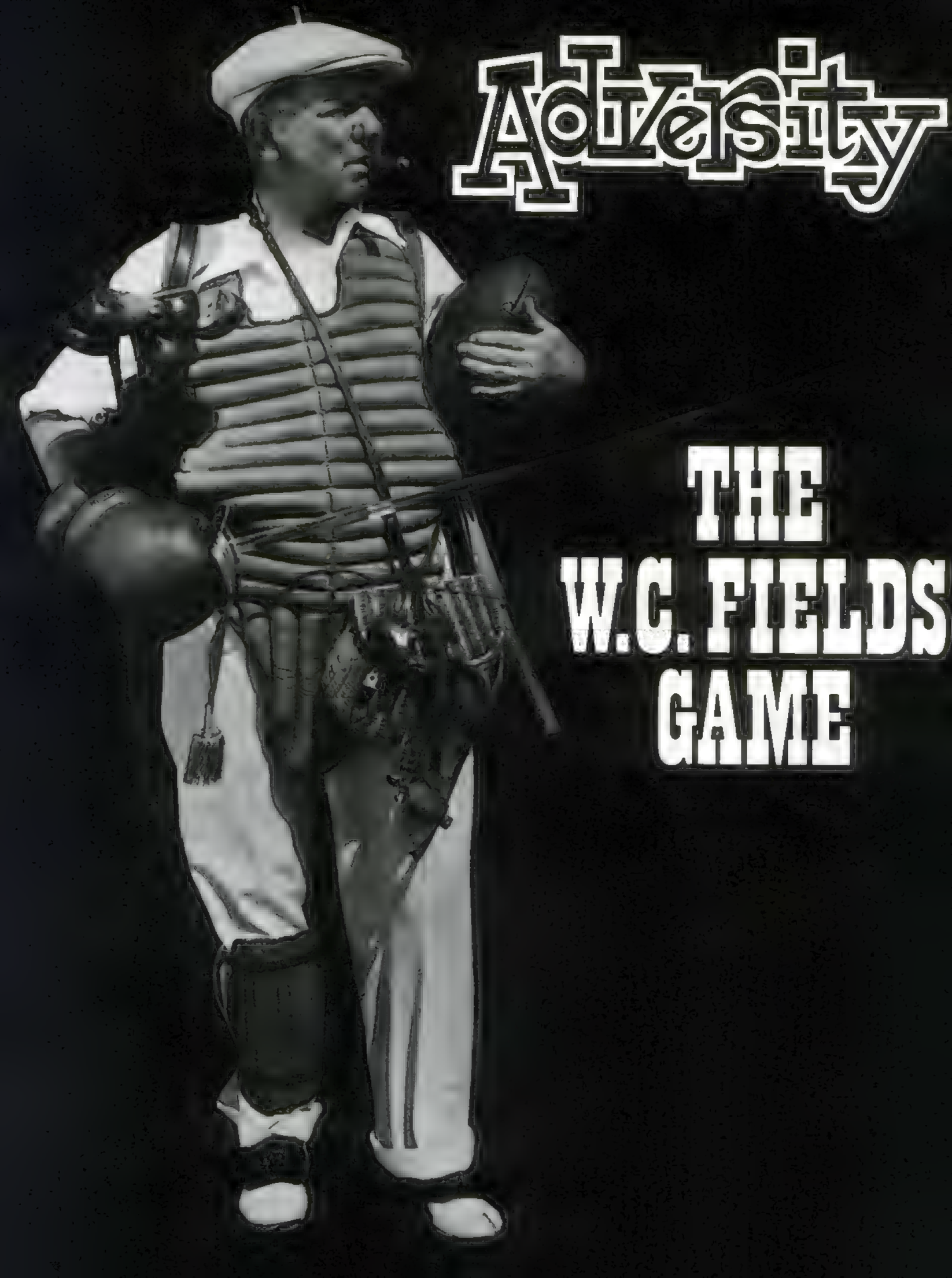
Criblecoblis the screenwriter was pretty odd in his own right. His only film is incomprehensible, and would never have been made if Fields hadn't insisted. Furthermore, the star himself never made another film after the Criblecoblis fiasco, although he appeared as himself in a few. Many people claim to have seen this movie, and some of them swear there was a recognizable plot. These people are probably the same whackos who see myraid symbolism in the retractable ball point pen, however, and should not be considered too seriously.

Never Give A Sucker An Even Break

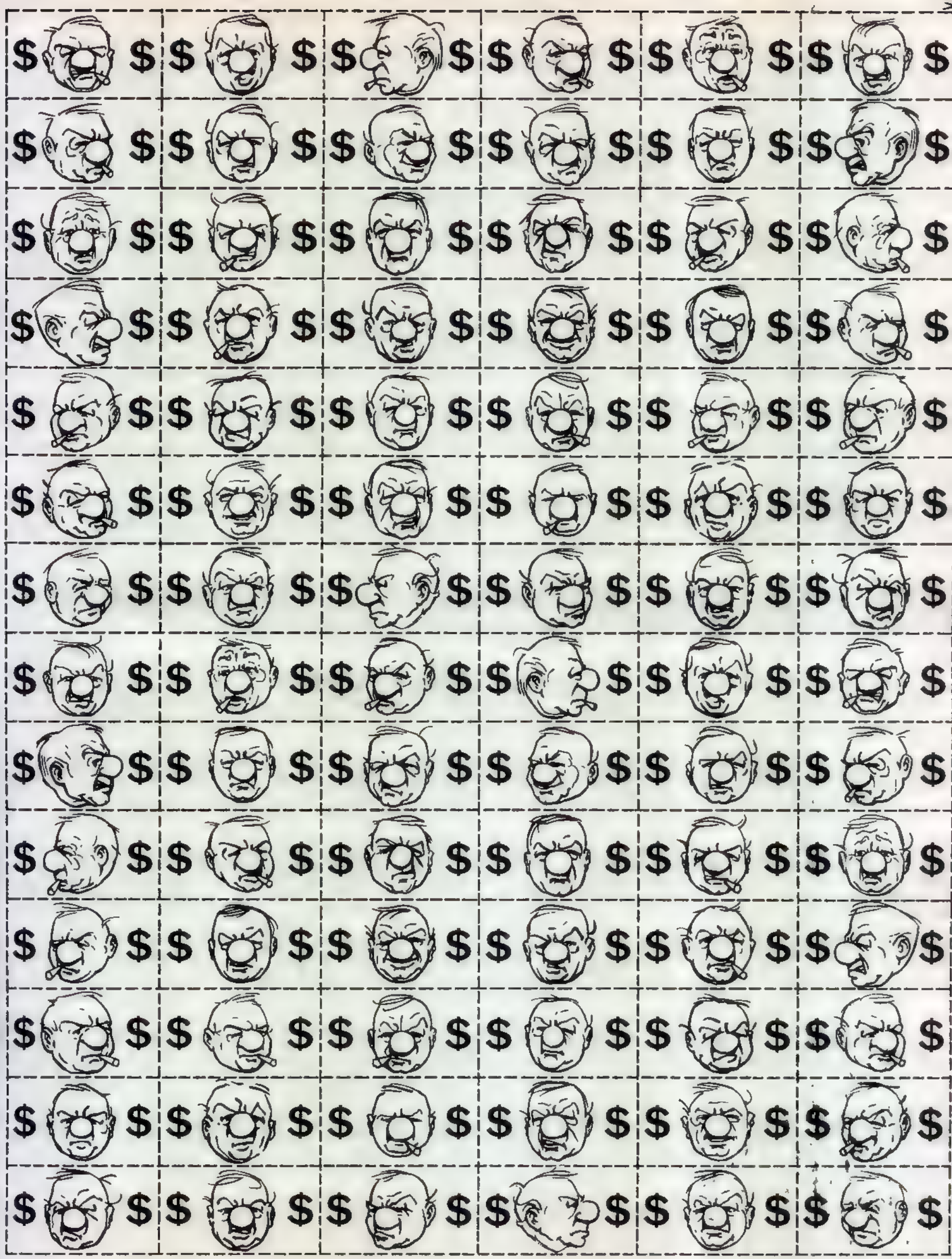
Complete Filmography of W.C. Fields

	YEAR	TITLE	DIRECTOR	STUDIO	TIME
SILENT	1915	POOL SHARKS	Edwin Middleton	Gaumont	1 Reel
	X 1915	HIS LORDSHIP'S DILEMNA	William Haddock	Gaumont	1 Reel
	X 1924	JANICE MEREDITH	E. Mason Hopper	Cosmopolitan	153 Min.
	1925	SALLY OF THE SAWDUST (POPPY)	D.W. Griffith	Paramount	104
	X 1926	THAT ROYLE GIRL	D.W. Griffith	Paramount	114
	X 1926	IT'S THE OLD ARMY GAME	Edward Sutherland	Paramount	70
	X 1926	SO'S YOUR OLD MAN	Gregory La Cava	Paramount	67
	X 1927	THE POTTERS	Fred Newmeyer	Paramount	71
	X 1927	RUNNING WILD	Gregory LaCava	Paramount	68
	X 1927	TWO FLAMING YOUTHS	John Waters	Paramount	55
	X 1928	TILLIE'S PUNCTURED ROMANCE	Edward Sutherland	Paramount	57
	X 1928	FOOLS FOR LUCK	Charles F. Reisner	Paramount	60
SOUND	1930	THE GOLF SPECIALIST	Monte Brice	R.K.O.	20
	1931	HER MAJESTY LOVE	William Dieterie	Warner Bros.	75
	1932	MILLION DOLLAR LEGS	Edward Cline	Paramount	64
	1932	IF I HAD A MILLION	Norman Taurog	Paramount	88
	1932	THE DENTIST	Leslie Pearce	Mack Sennett	20
	1933	THE FATAL GLASS OF BEER	Clyde Bruckman	Mack Sennett	21
	1933	THE PHARMACIST	Arthur Ripley	Mack Sennett	20
	1933	THE BARBER SHOP	Arthur Ripley	Mack Sennett	21
	1933	INTERNATIONAL HOUSE	Edward Sutherland	Paramount	70
	1933	TILLIE AND GUS	Francis Martin	Paramount	58
	1933	ALICE IN WONDERLAND	Norman McLeod	Paramount	90
	1934	SIX OF A KIND	Leo McCarey	Paramount	65
	X 1934	YOU'RE TELLING ME	Earle Kenton	Paramount	66
	1934	THE OLD - FASHIONED WAY	William Beaudine	Paramount	66
	1934	MRS. WIGGS OF THE CABBAGE PATCH	Norman Taurog	Paramount	80
	1934	IT'S A GIFT	Norman McLeod	Paramount	73
	1935	DAVID COPPERFIELD	George Cukor	M.G.M.	133
	1935	MISSISSIPPI	Edward Sutherland	Paramount	80
	1935	THE MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE	Clyde Bruckman	Paramount	65
	1936	POPPY	Edward Sutherland	Paramount	75
	1938	THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1938	Mitchell Leisen	Paramount	97
	1939	YOU CAN'T CHEAT AN HONEST MAN	George Marshall	Universal	76
	1940	MY LITTLE CHICKADEE	Edward Cline	Universal	83
	1940	BANK DICK	Edward Cline	Universal	74
	1941	NEVER GIVE A SUCKER AN EVEN BREAK	Edward Cline	Universal	70
	X 1942	TALES OF MANHATTAN	Julien Duvivier	20th Century Fox	118
	1944	FOLLOW THE BOYS	Edward Sutherland	Universal	118
	1944	SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD	S. Sylvan Simon	United Artists	93
	1944	SENSATIONS OF 1945	Andrew L. Stone	United Artists	87

The symbol "X" with the date indicates that there is either no existing or available print of the film.


Adversity
THE
W.C. FIELDS
GAME

The W.C. FIELDS GAME
Adversity
LIMBO
PHILA. PA.
SWAMP
ROAD CLOSED
DISASTER!
BAD NEWS!
GOOD NEWS!
JAIL
BAD NEWS!
DISASTER!
BAD NEWS!
DISASTER!
BAD NEWS!
BAD NEWS!
PLACE DISASTER CARDS HERE, FACE DOWN.
RETURN TO BOTTOM OF STACK AFTER DRAW
HOME SWEET HOME
BLACK PUSSY CAT CAFE



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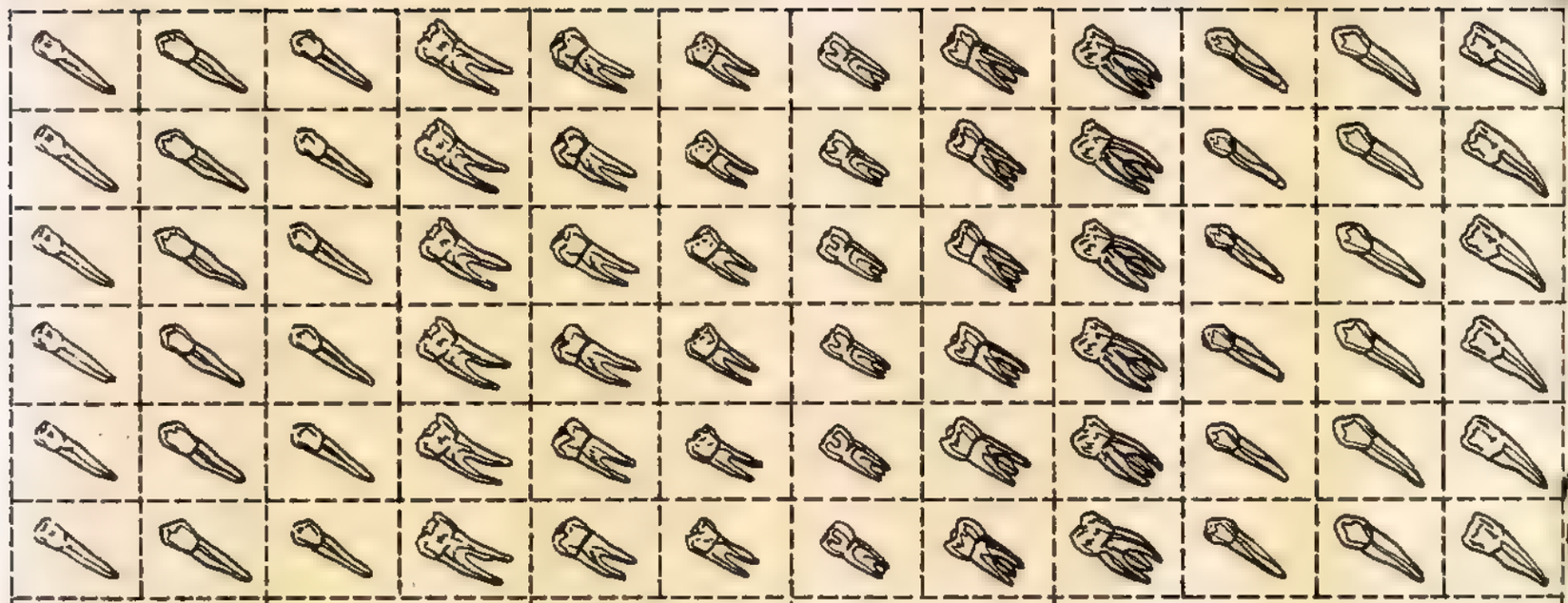
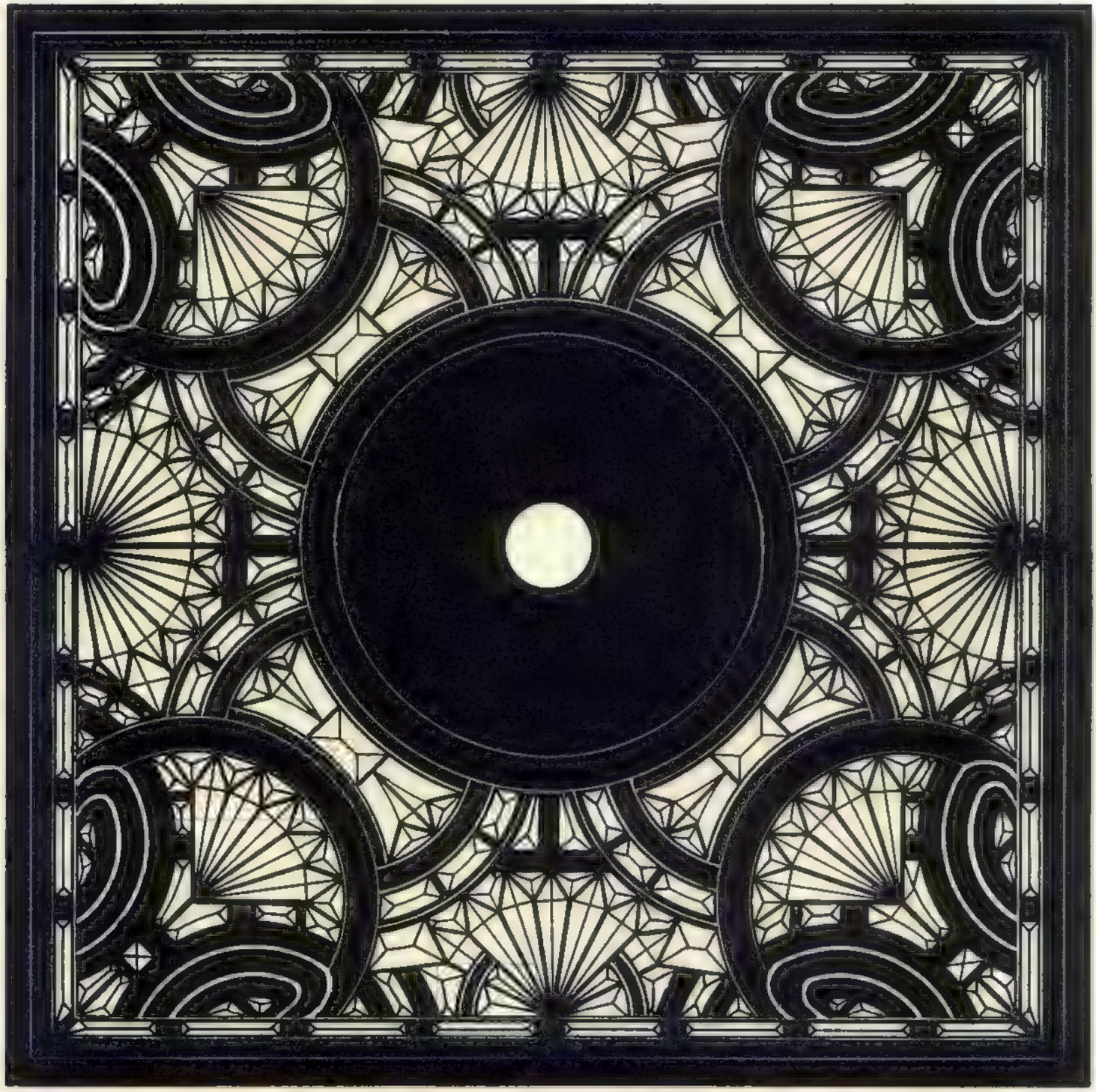


No standing, sitting, parking or laughing allowed here. Go to Lompoc and pick crabapples.	You're in Deadwood for the rodeo. Go to the bank and make a deposit.	Go sit in the Black Pussy Cat cafe and brood about the condition of your liver.	Go get a road map. You're in *East* Philadelphia.	Go to the dentist for a cleaning. He's the man for the job.	Go fall down an elephant pit and break your collarbone. Lose a turn while you're at it.
Go to jail for pruning a fig tree. Next thing you'll want to marry one.	You can't stand here. Go ahead or back one space.	Go home . . . you're 76 years old and you forgot to cut the umbilical cord.	Turn to the left and cough. Cough harder. That's a nasty cough you've got there.	You're in the movies with the measles. Lose a turn.	Everybody's in the movies with the measles. Everybody loses a turn.
Welcome to Tiddlyville, last stop before Fork River. Go to the bank to make a deposit.	Stub your toe in the dark, looking for the fusebox. Go back ten spaces and throw again.	Go back five spaces before you get lost.	Go jump in the lake and be bitten by eleven different varieties of primordial clams.	Step to the rear of the bus and fall over a lawnmower handle sticking out in the aisle. Lose one tooth.	Natural tunnel off to the right. Go ahead seven spaces.
Go sit in the Black Pussy Cat Cafe and talk to the bartender about baseball.	You've gained six inches around your waist. Do a hundred pushups and have a piece of banana fudge.	Go to the swamp to catch frogs. Find a wart on your nose.	Too close to the ether . . . you're in Limbo.	Go to jail for loitering in a public park.	You're exhausted after spending 45 minutes looking for your cufflink. Lose a turn.
You're startled by what sounds like the growl of a bear. Run. Take an extra turn.	A bear has followed you down your tunnel. You'd better take an extra turn.	A bear is gaining on you. Run, you coward. Take an extra turn.	You have been eaten by a bear. You lose.	Go apply for the first commercial moon trip. Nobody will miss you anyway.	Go to jail for taking inventory with a blunt crayon.
Go bark at the moon.	Go to jail for trespassing on a trepestle. Dupestle was bad enough.	Go soak yer head.	Go to the store. Bring back the wrong change. No allowance for a week, dummy.	Go to the movies and keep your mouth shut about your sister.	Go to the dentist to complain about his bill and lose two teeth in the ensuing fight.
Canoe out to Kodiak Island to look for an Eskimo.	Lost on Kodiak Island after running several miles from a bear who surprised you peeping at an Eskimo.	An Eskimo has assaulted you with a frozen seal for peeping at his wife. You're in Limbo, brother.	Go ahead four spaces. You're my kind of sport, sport.	Go stand on your head.	Drop your last hot dog in the sand and end up eating a ketchup sandwich.
A piano falls on your head. Go to jail for obstructing a musical passage.	Go to the Swamp to look for your sister.	Safe on the back porch.	Go to jail for slandering the three gentlemen who allegedly mugged you.	Your birthday cake candles burn down your house and your insurance man gets a big laugh out of it.	Go sit in the Black Pussy Cat Cafe and cry in your beer.
Go to jail for canning marmalade out of season.	Go to Lompoc to see your old girlfriend. She's gained 40 lbs. and has 3 daughters named Faith, Hope, and Roberta.	Welcome to Greasewood City, home of the world's largest barbed wire museum. Go to the bank to make a deposit.	Lose four teeth fighting the town bully.	Go home, yer mother's callin' ya.	Go stand in the corner and think about Clayton Bierbock, whoever he is.
Welcome to Kodiak Island. Slip on the ice while peeping at an Eskimo of uncertain sex and lose two teeth.	Go back one space whether you want to or not.	Stay right where you are! Lose a turn.	Go to the dentist to find your wife's gloves. Trip over Baby Leroy on the rug and lose a tooth.	The lucky horseshoe hanging over your barn door falls on your head and knocks you unconscious. Lose a turn.	Go to the end of the line. Get lost looking for 1313 Sumner Ave. Lose your last token. Walk back home in the rain.



Sheriff John Hoxley

Flower Belle

Larson E. Whipsnade

Prof. Eustace McGargle

Egbert Souse

Cuthbert J. Twillie

Adversity

On the way to the finance company to plead for a second mortgage on your house, you're attacked by a ferocious St. Berhard, who knocks you through the window of the bakery. Pay $200 for damages, and lose a turn buying new insurance at double risk rates after the company you've been shelling out monthly installments to for the past twenty-five years cancels your policy for being accident prone.

Coming home late one night from the pub you take a shortcut behind the old sawmill. In the dark you stray off the path and step on a sleeping skunk. Lose two turns cleaning up and start out again from the Black Pussy Cat Cafe. You haven't been down along the old creek trail for a good while.

You get wrapped up in an exciting story in a Spicy Adventure pulp about a veiled woman and an Indian Fakir and let your bathwater run over the top. The water damage to the apartment below takes 50% of your entire fortune, and you lose two teeth as a result of your neighbor's personal complaint. And you lose a turn while out looking for a new apartment. Start out again from the movies, where you've escaped to pursue your fantasies.

While waiting for the bus, it begins to snow. A pelican, lost in the storm, flies into your face and knocks you into the gutter where you smash the snakebite medicine in your hip pocket and get your nose stuck in the sewer grating. Go to jail for disturbing the peace.

On the way to the golf course a roadhog in a cement truck forces you off the shoulder into a briar patch. Lose two turns and develop a bad charleyhorse getting your car back on the highway. Resume your journey from the same spot.

You're listening to Amos and Andy on the radio when the telephone rings. It's the Name That Tune contest on another station. You throw your back out trying to stretch to change the dial without pulling the phone off the wall and lose two turns recovering at home.

Unknown to you, a wild rhinocerous has escaped from the circus. Meanwhile, you've developed a cold sore on your lip. It's been hailing steadily for three days, and your five children have whooping cough. That night, as you stagger to the medicine cabinet for some aspirin, you trip over an empty beer can and break your leg. Lose all your money to the doctor, except $100, and proceed with the game from where you are.

You answer a knock at the door, expecting your nephew, who's just been expelled from military school, but instead it's two Portuguese ladies from the Saturday Bible Society on an evangelical mission. They lecture you for three solid hours in a language you can't understand, and after you've finally gotten rid of them you realize you missed your appointment with the dentist. Lose two teeth for not catching those cavities in time.

Recovering from food poisoning from the chicken soup the widow next door insisted you eat while in bed with the mumps, you've just spread out your complete stamp collection, including a rare set of Borneo first day covers, when a baseball crashes through the window and the whole pile of stamps flies out with the draft into the mud. Go to jail for cursing a minor.

While passing an afternoon at a friendly game of cards with the fellows in Kelly's garage, you swallow the cork from a wine bottle and knock over a two gallon jug of molasses in your distress. Kelly slips in the mess and falls square on top of you. Lose $400 in various doctor bills.

While shaving, you sneeze, which startles the cat, who knocks the radio into the sink, giving you a nasty jolt that throws you out of the window into your nephew's wagon which rolls into the empty swimming pool of the house next door. Lose six teeth and one turn while recuperating. Start out from home when the time comes.

On a spiritual mission to Afghanistan you pause at a sacred temple where nine naked virgins wreathe you in garlands and your wife orders orchids for your imminent funeral. Lose a turn trying to placate her, and fail. On the flight back to New York the airport's fogged in, so you end up in East Philadelphia.

Your barber mentions that an intense looking man named Farnsbarns has been asking the neighbors about you. Little by little, as time goes by, you develop an uneasy suspicion that something is wrong. Your friends are never home when you call. You're fired from your job, but no reason is given. Your wife leaves a cryptic note and disappears with the children. You're certain you're being followed by a sinister Ethiopian gentleman with a ring in his ear, and curious accidents dog your steps night and day. Finally, one rainy midnight, you hear someone prowling around the house. You reach for the phone, only to find it dead. There is a loud crash from downstairs, and as you leap from your bed a bear trap slams shut over your ankle. As you sprawl helpless, in agony, on the floor by your bed coughing from the thick smoke rapidly filling the room, a low gutteral voice rasps out of the darkness: "I told you I'd get you, Quigly!" and even though your name is Goldberg, you realize that, for you, the game is over. You lose.

Old farmer Smith's fat daughter Clementine stood you up for your Sunday night date to go down to Belle Fourche for the dance, but since you've already shaved and shined your shoes you decide to take in a movie. Only picture in town is a feature length technicolor subtitled Greek documentary about glassblowing, but as you're debating with yourself about whether or not to go in, you spot a couple of curvy usherettes with pleated red skirts with the hem above the knee chatting in the lobby so you buy a ticket and go in. As you're escorted to your seat you remark to your guide that her patellas are particularly attractive and she wallops you with her flashlight. This knocks your popcorn all over the couple in the next row, who join in attacking you. In the scuffle your custom designed toupee is lost and your glasses are broken. Outside, after they've thrown you into the alley, you're mugged by a pair of Arabian cowboys who take the watch your father gave you on your twelfth birthday. Later, hitchhiking back to the farm, you're run over by a tractor driven by those fool Hobbs brothers, drunk and disorderly as usual, and left for dead. Lose four teeth and one turn, and consider yourself lucky.

A tough palooka down at the pool hall trips over your pet duck and is so infuriated at missing his shot that he throws the both of you bodily out the window. Your fall is broken by a well-dressed young man with a mustache who turns out to be an insurance salesman named Karl LaFong. Before you can even get to your feet, he's begun his spiel, pulling out various documents to illustrate the benefits of his full coverage policy. Retrieving your cane, you beat the fellow severely about the head and shoulders until a passing coastguardsman makes a citizens arrest and takes you to jail where you spend the night vainly attempting to secure some medical help for your injured duck. Released on bond the next morning at nine, you rush to the factory and arrive fourteen minutes late for work. Your supervisor, Mr. Peevey, gives you a harsh reprimand for your tardiness, and makes unexcusably insulting remarks about the unconscious fowl you've tried to make comfortable in your 'out' basket. Mr. Armstrong, the president, steps out of his office just as you're making an obscene gesture to Mr. Peevey, and fires you on the spot. That night, your duck dies. Lose all your money except $100 because you can't collect unemployment. Start out again from home, but don't expect to get very far.

As you're strolling past the bank a masked bandit runs out, sideswiping a foul-mouthed old bat who inadvertently knocks you into an open manhole with her umbrella, whereupon you're swept out to sea on a sluggish but swift-flowing stream to land on an uncharted island off the coast of Wales which is populated by a covey of Welsh medium rarebits who lounge around the beach all day roasting bananas, but who interrupt their idle reveries long enough to mail you to the Cincinnati Zoo with a sticker on your forehead proclaiming "this merchandise received defective, found wanting, patently absurd, and thoroughly disgusting", where you languish in relative obscurity, subsisting primarily on peanuts and an occasional fig, until your Aunt Thelma from Duluth, on a 'Sisters of the Sexual Revolution' tour of every town and hamlet in the state with a French name recognizes you by the tattoo of a hippy Hula dancer on your left bicep, and has you committed to the funny farm for impersonating a baboon, where, of course, they check your social security number, and nail you for two years back taxes. Pay Uncle Sam 50% of every dime you've got, after losing two turns. You'd better stop in the Black Pussy Cat Cafe for a bracer after *this* experience.

KODIAK ISLAND
PLACE ADVERSITY CARDS HERE, FACE DOWN
RETURN TO BOTTOM OF STACK AFTER DRAW
BAD NEWS!
DISASTER!
DISASTER
MOVIES
LOMPOC
GOOD NEWS!
LAST NATIONAL BANK
BANK
EAST PHILA.
PLACE BAD NEWS CARDS HERE, FACE DOWN
RETURN TO BOTTOM OF STACK AFTER DRAW

OBJECT OF GAME

Any number of people from two to six can play this game at the same time. Why they would want to is another matter entirely. You'll notice there are any number of ways to lose, and winning is at best a plodding travail past ridiculous obstacles. As in everyday life, cheating is allowed as long as you don't get caught. In point of fact, it's almost impossible to win unless you do.

You're starting out on the Path of Adversity with $1200, a full set of teeth, and your respected family name. You're trying to get to Philadelphia. Nobody can imagine why, but you've got some cockeyed reason.

Somewhere along the way, someone must have wanted to go to Philadelphia, because there are a whole slew of people there now, and every once in awhile you're bound to see others headed in that direction. So just keep your reasons to yourself, but try to get there anyhow.

There are three 'good news' squares on the board, signifying the three happy days in your life . . . Your wedding day, the day your divorce papers came through, and the day you found a $10 bill on the sidewalk in front of the Chinese laundry. These are the only safe squares on the board. Every other square represents one day in your journey toward Philadelphia, and one more little hazard of the trip. Forfeit the penalties described on the cards — they're the debits of a misspent life. And whatever happens, keep your chin up. There are lots of folks worse off than you are.

PREPARATORY PROCEDURES

(A) Carefully cut out the play money, play teeth, Adversity cards, characters, and mysterious black box of Vastmanland. If you intend to use the characters as your playing pieces, they must first be mounted on heavy cardboard and braced on the back so they'll stand up. Otherwise, just use colored buttons.

(B) Mix up a barrel of Mallardian Calypso Toddy (commonly known as MCT). Sample freely until you're in the mood to play.

(C) Steal the two dice from your child's Monopoly set and throw the remains away. Whether or not your child is nearby to complain, the act itself should put you in the properly aggressive and competitive spirit.

OFFICIAL RULES FOR PLAYING THE GAME OF

DISTRIBUTION OF PLAYING PIECES

Money— $1200 per player
Teeth — 12 assorted per player

PLAYING PROCEDURE

(1) Everyone starts with mother. High throw makes the first break. You may move the number of spaces shown on *either* of the dice or the *total* of both, whichever you prefer. Don't forget to take an Adversity card every time you land on a blank space. If you land on a 'bad news' square, take one of the medium sized Adversity cards. If you land on a 'disaster' square, take one of the great big Adversity cards, and do whatever is called for. If you land on a 'good news' square, you don't have to take any card at all, and play passes to the poor soul to your left.

(2) Only place you're bound to pass is the Black Pussy Cat Cafe. Every time you pass through you pause long enough for a quick beer. Keep score. Soon as you've had 12 drinks, you're too stoned to go on. You lose.

(3) Once in awhile you'll run into the dentist. Only way to get out of the dentist's office is to give up a tooth. Soon as you've lost 12 teeth, you're too gummed up to continue. You lose.

(4) Passing through the most unlikely villages, without reasonable motivation, you'll feel the urge to make a $100 deposit in the local bank. Soon as you're broke, you're a loser. It's the American way.

(5) If any player lands on the same space occupied by another player, both immediately retire to the Black Pussy Cat Cafe to reminisce about old times.

(6) Throwing doubles is regarded as a jinx that can only be broken by the ritual of the mysterious black box of Vastmanland, which figured so prominently in the affairs of a peculiar fellow named Dunkenfield. Your character is frozen while the black box top is placed on the floor. Balancing a penny on your nose, you may use any stratagem to drop it as close to the center of the design as you can. If your coin lands touching the inner circle, you have hit the lottery for $1,000,000, tax free! You buy the town of Philadelphia, throw out the Mayor, and declare yourself Emperor of the State. In short, you have won the game. However, if you land anywhere else within the square, you've earned the contempt of your fellow players, and a 'bad news' card to boot. And if you're so clumsy that you cannot even get your coin inside the square at all, you are obviously not a proficient player of this game, and will be obliged to suffer the consequences of a 'disaster' card, which *could be* terminal. Good luck, one and all.

(7) Only way out of jail is to tunnel over to the swamp. You sure won't be paroled with *your* attitude.

(8) Only way out of the swamp is to hitchhike to Lompoc, which is little enough incentive.

(9) Only way out of Lompoc is to clobber the town bully from behind with a well-aimed brick. You'll need a lot of luck, namely 7 or 11 on the dice.

(10) Only way out of Limbo is to find the famous lost black pearl mines in the grottos of Sarawak. Either that or throwing snake eyes puts you anywhere this side of Lompoc. (The far side of Philadelphia)

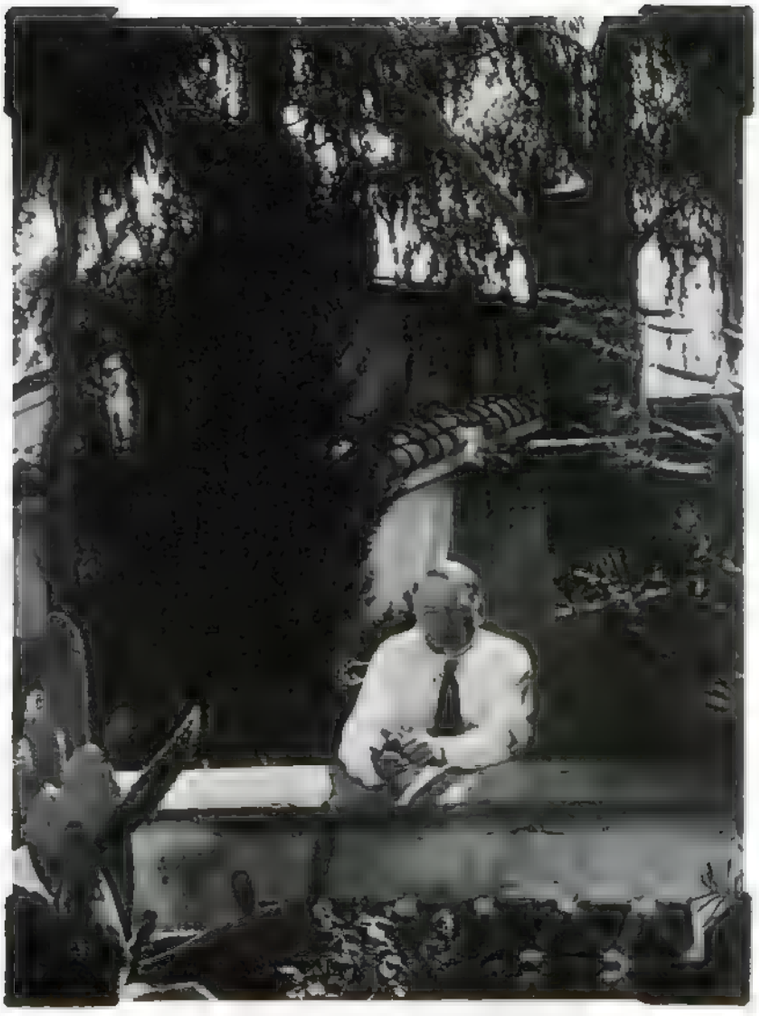
FINAL REMARKS

Properly played, this is a pretty dull game, drunk or sober. 'Pointless' was the remark of one game critic. Another claimed: 'This is a degenerate Communist plot to corrupt our youth and destroy the moral fabric of America!' But we feel that's somewhat extreme. At best, given the board and its hazards, the authors feel sure that most clever players could devise even more absurd rules than we have. Life itself is a plethora of diversity.

Never lose faith! Adversity is the challenge to the human spirit! We must face our destinies with courage and determination. Other people have made it! Philadelphia or bust!

Better yet, go pull the Monopoly board out of the trash. Those Parker Brothers sure hit on a good thing!

BETWEEN THE SCENES



W. C. FIELDS

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a fussy old man in the movies

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Allan Wood was a stooge, and he's proud of it. Remember W.C. Fields classic golf sketch? As done in Earl Carroll's Vanities of 1929, it was Wood as the caddy who gave Fields so much trouble with his squeaky shoes, doleful expression, and that gigantic cream pie.

"Fields needed a partner for the 'golf specialist' and they let me try out for it, mainly because I was short. I was already on the bill in a dance act, but I was thrilled at the chance to work with Fields, the headliner. Bill took one look at me and asked if my name was Wood. Turned out he'd known my father years before, and had recognized the resemblance. I was just a kid then, and from then on he always seemed like an uncle to me. But that didn't sway him professionally. I was so bad in the first rehearsal of the sketch that Bill didn't think I could handle it, and told me so. I begged him to give me another chance, and he did. Nobody was happier than I was that it turned out to be one of his most popular routines."

Wood, at 66, is a feisty old trouper. He interrupts himself in the middle of one story to tell another. But he's not a rambler . . . just enjoying himself as the anecdotes crisscross to remind him of half forgotten moments from an era as alien from today as if it were a century ago. He's done a lot before and since, but it's the years with Fields he recalls most vividly from a lifetime of show business memories.

Like so many other energetic youngsters more interested in having fun than carving out a career, Wood started in vaudeville in the early twenties with a comedy dance act billed as the Bennett Brothers. None of them were brothers, none of them were named Bennett. They were first going to call themselves the Six Eccentric Legs, but soon realized that none of them could spell it. They took 'Bennett' from a song plugger's door, insuring that at least the fellow would remember their name after they'd done their turn. It proved a good bet, and the name looked just fine on a showcard, so they kept it.

"We got the biggest laugh I ever heard in a theater, during the golf sketch, the night I fell into the scenery and couldn't get up. I wore oversize shoes in the act, hadn't quite gotten used to them yet, fell over the prop hedge and got stuck between it and the painted backdrop of the golf course. The audience screamed. My feet were the only part of me they could see, flailing in the air above the 'hedge', and it was obvious that I really couldn't get out. But Bill didn't make a move to help me. He was completely unflapable. He just stood there and watched me, adlibbing in his offhand mumble, until I finally managed to get to my feet on my own. The audience was still laughing, and I looked at Bill in a panic, wondering what to do next. 'Just letum go,' he whispered, sotto voce, and when the tumult finally died down we finished the scene as usual.

Veteran vaudevillian and film actor, Wood lives with his family in Phoenix, Arizona. Although supposedly retired, he still appears occasionally in TV series like the Dick Van Dyke Show, produced nearby in a town called Carefree.

I was exhilarated by the response, after the initial embarrassment had worn off, and after the show I suggested to Bill that we leave it in as part of the act. He didn't consider it for long. 'Won't work, Allan,' he said, 'It worked tonight because it was real. We could never duplicate it.' He was right, of course, but I'll never forget that laugh."

After the golf sketch, Wood became Field's foil in most of his stage acts at the Vanities, later on the road, and at the Palace, in New York. At one time they did four scenes together in one show . . . one of them a now forgotten act called the 'Caledonia Express' in which Fields as a train conductor, complete with Scottish brogue, tried to evict a stubborn passenger (Ben Blue) from a railway car.

There were other acts too, some of them, like 'Bring 'em Young' and 'Don't Do Anything Till You Hear From Me' (in which Fields portrayed a not too eager bridegroom on his wedding night) probably too risque to be considered for a film short at the time. One that should have been filmed was the 'Peanut Vendor', in which Fields had a complete bar outfitted beneath the subterfuge of an outwardly innocent two-wheeled cart.

How much did the routines vary from night to night? "We took a few liberties occasionally, but Bill was a perfectionist and liked a pretty tight act. He wouldn't depend on any props that he couldn't control himself. Later, in his films, he allowed sight gags once in awhile, but on the stage it was just Bill and whatever he could do with his own two hands."

"One night, as the old man with the full beard in the Dentist scene, I adlibbed a line that got a very tepid response from the audience, but Bill covered for me and went on with the routine. When he said 'Do you want gas?' I was supposed to say 'Yes, and you'd better check the oil too'. But instead I said, "Yes, and check my left rear tire too, I think it's flat.' Without skipping a beat, Fields said 'Flat, is it? Not as flat as that joke.' And of course he got a laugh on it. After the show I apologized, but he just shrugged it off. 'Well, Allan, that's the way you learn,' he told me, 'If you had gotten a laugh, we'd leave it in.' I was more careful after that, but occasionally I'd do a bit of business that *did* work, and Bill would encourage me to keep it in."

"All those stories about how nasty Fields was . . . they're not true at all. He was a very generous guy, willing to believe the best about people until they proved otherwise. After every show he'd send Asa, his chauffeur, to the box office with a $100 bill, and Asa would bring back tens. Bill would crumple them up and put them in his pockets. He knew all the oldtimers from vaudeville and the stage, and when he met them on the street or at the stagedoor after a show, he'd pass one of those crumpled bills when they shook hands. He didn't regard it as charity either. He respected them as fellow professionals who were weathering a bad season, something he'd gone through many times himself."

Wood has many potent memories of the showfolk he's known, some of which still can't be told in print for fear of lawsuits. And he can't help jumping up to act out the parts, complete with voices, gestures, and pertinent asides.

Did Fields drink as much as people think? Not according to Wood. "His nose, for example. That wasn't from booze. Before we met he'd done a tramp act, using putty to mold a big clown nose. Occasionally it got in the pores, and he'd have a terrible time cleaning it out. Once he got a handful of toothpicks and adorned his proboscis like a porcupine to frighten the girls backstage. From this foolishness it became infected and a doctor permanently injured his skin by overexposing his face to X-rays."

Did Fields get any kick out of performing? "He never showed any emotion. Oh, when things went wrong he'd show annoyance. I remember one time on the road we played to a very small audience because they'd put the wrong date on the posters around town, and nobody knew we were there. We must have finished 20 minutes early that night. Bill told me not to wait, just to go right through the act. But he was a pretty tough egg, you know. He considered performing a job, like anything else."

But he must have done his best whenever he went out on the stage? "Oh, he always did his best. He worked to get everything he could out of every line, every move, and he expected anyone working with him to do the same. He was an artist!"

It was a real pleasure meeting Allan Wood, and after our visit I felt I'd met his old friend, too. "If I were to introduce you to Fields, he's put out his hand and say 'Hello, ---, whadaya drink?" which meant, I'm sure, a lot more than the sum of its words.

TEEL BROS.
LOCATION
WATER TANK
№ 2
HE. 4200
LOMPOC
BILL PEARSON

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1. A French portable gyroscopic camera was used for the first time in this country in the drugstore scenes for Fields initial Paramount starring film IT'S THE OLD ARMY GAME. Cameraman Alvin Wyckoff has the novel contrivance strapped to his chest. By this means he was able to follow Fields about the set to secure continuous movement in the scene while Edward Sutherland (center) directed.

2. There was apparently some effort by the Paramount studio to team Fields with Chester Conklin, another contract player, a la Laurel and Hardy. This is a publicity shot from about 1927.

3. THE POTTERS

4–5. Whether the studio or Fields himself was motivated by the dominating Chaplin influence I couldn't say, but he did sport a clip-on mustache in several silent films like IT'S THE OLD ARMY GAME.

6–9. SO'S YOUR OLD MAN was filmed during prohibition, which might offer a clue to what's going on here.

10–12. TILLIE'S PUNCTURED ROMANCE.

13. FOOLS FOR LUCK.

14–15. RUNNING WILD.

16. THE DENTIST.

17. THE PHARMACIST.

18. POPPY.

19. MILLION DOLLAR LEGS.

20–21. TILLIE AND GUS.

22–25. INTERNATIONAL HOUSE, with Gracie Allen on his lap, Peggy Hopkins Joyce at his shoulder.

26. DAVID COPPERFIELD.

27. SIX OF A KIND, with George Burns.

28–33. All from MISSISSIPPI. That's Bing Crosby with the sideburns.

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